

To: Beauvais, Joel[Beauvais.Joel@epa.gov]; Burke, Thomas[Burke.Thomas@epa.gov]; Rupp, Mark[Rupp.Mark@epa.gov]
From: Enck, Judith
Sent: Mon 6/13/2016 4:51:58 PM
Subject: region 2 News Clips (PFCs)

Times Union: Petersburg PFOA water test results announced: About 1 of every 4 samples were above federal guidelines

By Bethany Bump

Updated 7:30 pm, Saturday, June 11, 2016

Water samples tested from three private wells and 59 private homes in Petersburg came back above federal guidelines for PFOA contamination, Rensselaer County officials said Friday.

The county, with the state Health Department and Department of Environmental Conservation, has sampled public and private supplies in the area around the Taconic plastics plant due to concerns over perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, in the water. The latest results came from samples taken from May 4-9.

Out of 18 samples from private wells:

Three showed contamination above the federal guidance level of 70 parts per trillion;

One showed contamination between 21 and 70 ppt; 14 were considered non-detectable, meaning contamination levels were less than 0.67 ppt.

Out of 234 samples taken at private homes, 59 showed contamination above the federal level:

44 samples were between 71 and 1,000 ppt;

15 samples were over 1,001 ppt.

Another 46 samples showed contamination below 20 ppt; 26 samples showed contamination between 21 and 70 ppt; and 103 samples were non-detectable.

For some of the homes, a test had been taken before a water treatment system was installed and then afterward, in order to see whether the system worked.

The testing was performed by Pace Analytical through Bender Labs. Results from 79 samples are still pending.

Those with private water sources with PFOA contamination over 70 ppt can have a filter system

installed at their home by Taconic.

Water testing will continue and results will be released as they become available, the county said. Anyone with questions should contact the county health department at 270-2655.

Times Union: PFOA photos: Hoosick Falls residents make plea on Twitter

Social media campaign calls out politicians over Hoosick Falls pollution

By Casey Seiler

Updated 9:10 am, Saturday, June 11, 2016

Hoosick Falls resident, Corey Aldrich, 6, displays a sign with his body's PFOA level after receiving the results of a recent blood test conducted by the state. The photo was posted on Twitter by parents, Josh ... more

ALBANY - A group of Hoosick Falls residents have taken their outrage and worry over the results of state blood tests to social media, launching a Twitter feed featuring photos in which they hold up signs citing what they say is the amount of perfluorooctanoic acid or PFOA in their bodies.

"I'm only six ... can you ignore that???", reads a sign held up by Corey Aldrich. His stated PFOA level is 142 parts per billion. His 4-year-old sister, Alyssa, holds a sign revealing that her body chemistry includes a PFOA level of 117 ppb.

SEE US @stevemcny @NYGovCuomo @NYSenate @NYSA_Majority @AGSchneiderman @kathymarchione @SenGillibrand pic.twitter.com/CkwudwFjKj

— pfoaprojectny (@pfoaprojectny1) June 9, 2016

The average level of PFOA in the blood of most people is 2.08 parts per billion state officials said last week. In Hoosick Falls and the surrounding area, the "geometric mean" level of those who had their blood tested was 23.5 ppb, or roughly 11 times the national average, according to the state's compilation of results.

"Hoosick Falls WILL be heard on our PFOA contamination!!," reads another Tweet from @PFOAProjectNY

"This project puts faces to blood level numbers," says another message. "We deserve hearings and support."

Another woman poses with "27.4" written on the back of her hand. Another, who gives her PFOA level as 22 ppb, submitted a photo with the message, "What does my number have to be for you to care?"

One of the organizers of the Twitter effort is Michelle O'Leary, a Hoosick Falls resident who is

among the plaintiffs in a class action lawsuit filed against Honeywell International and Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics in February. The companies are the current owners of the manufacturing plants that have been identified by state investigators as the most likely sources of the contamination.

"Our goal was kind of to raise awareness of the situation," O'Leary said in an interview.

O'Leary, who moved to Hoosick Falls last September, said that the voluntary nature of the social-media project overcame any reluctance people might have to revealing their PFOA levels.

"The majority of people are forthcoming — they want to have it known," she said.

A photo of Loreen Hackett, another Hoosick Falls resident who helped organize the effort, was the first to be posted on the feed, and reveals a PFOA level of 266 ppb. "Gee ... thanks," Hackett's sign reads.

With this new project, HF WILL BE SEEN and heard! @scottpwaldman @PreetBharara @HealthNYGov @kathymarchione pic.twitter.com/DkpRafwqgf

— pfoaprojectny (@pfoaprojectny1) June 9, 2016

In an interview, she said her PFOA level was comparable to what you would expect to find in a factory worker in a plant where PFOA is used. The substance, which is used in the manufacture of non-stick cookware, has been linked to a number of human maladies including several forms of cancer.

Corey and Alyssa Aldrich are Hackett's grandchildren.

"There are so many things they're not telling us," Hackett said. "Those (test result) envelopes just kick-started a lot of us into action."

The project, which began Thursday, calls out members of the state Legislature for failing to convene hearings to examine the state's response to PFOA contamination in Rensselaer County and elsewhere.

The problem was first uncovered in the summer of 2014 by a local citizen who conducted his own tests on the local water supply. His results failed to prompt a significant local, state or federal response until December 2015, when the federal Environmental Protection Agency advised residents to stop drinking or cooking with water from the village system.

The next month, Gov. Andrew Cuomo's administration moved to designate contaminated zones in and around Hoosick Falls as a Superfund site. The Taconic Plastics factory in the nearby Town of Petersburg was subsequently named as another PFOA Superfund site by the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

The state has installed filtration systems on the Hoosick Falls municipal water supply and private wells that show PFOA levels above the safe level set by the EPA.

PFOAProjectNY invites anyone in New York State to share their PFOA level by posting a photo on the group's Facebook page. The images are strikingly personal for a crisis that can seem

mired in science and bureaucracy.

"If that doesn't strike a chord with you, I don't know where you're coming from," said state Assemblyman Steve McLaughlin, R-Schaghticoke, in a Friday radio interview on WGDJ. The lawmaker, who represents part of the affected region, has been a harsh critic of the state's response to the crisis.

Hackett says McLaughlin encouraged the Twitter effort.

Despite initial talk about holding hearings on the causes of the crisis, state lawmakers backed off in recent months. This week, state Sen. Kathy Marchione, R-Halfmoon, said she supported Senate GOP Leader John Flanagan's continued resistance to holding hearings.

Loreen Hackett says she isn't sure whether the hearings "were budgeted away or traded away" as part of a political calculation.

Group puts PFOA numbers to the faces of people affected by the crisis: Questions remain about PFOA blood tests in Hoosick Falls

By Lindsay Nielsen

Published: June 10, 2016

Channel 10 News, Albany

ALBANY, N.Y. (NEWS10) – A newly formed group in Hoosick Falls called PFOA Project New York is putting PFOA level numbers to the faces affected by it.

The group was started by a family who says they don't want to be ignored and want legislators to hold hearings on the state's response to the water contamination issue.

Joshua Aldrich has only lived in Hoosick Falls for nine years. He was devastated when opened his mail Monday to discover the affect the PFOA water contamination has had on his family.

Aldrich has a PFOA blood level of 68.2 parts per billion. His sign read "why did you wait?" and his wife 63 parts per billion.

What rocked his world even more, the levels of PFOA in the blood of their two children.

The average level in the U.S. is 2.08. 6-year-old Corey's level is 142, his sign reads:

His 4-year-old sister Alyssa's level is 117. Her sign reads:

The couple says they believe the PFOA blood levels explain some of their children's health issues.

"They're supposed to be little kids playing in the backyard. You know swimming, playing with

their toys and not worrying about what's going to happen in the future," Aldrich said.

Alyssa and Corey's grandmother Loreen Hackett has live here her whole life.

"Pain and sickness a lot of it. My career got cut short because I've been out on disability. I loved my career."

The family wants legislators to hold hearing regarding the state's response to the contamination.

"We did it because they weren't listening to us," Aldrich said. "We were hoping maybe this will make them notice. Pay attention. We are here and we want to be seen. We want to be heard. We want to stop being shut up and told that pretty much we don't matter. The children definitely don't deserve this."

Images of those affected by the Hoosick Falls water contamination crisis:

<http://news10.com/2016/06/10/group-puts-pfoa-numbers-to-the-faces-of-people-affected/>

2 meetings in 2 towns battling the PFOA crisis

By Rachel Yonkunas

Published: June 10, 2016

Channel 10 News, Albany

PETERSBURGH, N.Y. (NEWS10) – Two important meetings took place in two Capital Region towns dealing with PFOA contamination.

First, nationally known law firm Weitz & Luxenberg held an emergency meeting in North Hoosick over blood test results.

"He's 10; his number is 40," Lynn Anson said.

After receiving her family's blood test results, Anson wants to know more about medical monitoring. But she said she can't wait for the state.

"It's very scary because I don't think anything's going to get done unless somebody really gets angry and pushes for it," she said.

Therefore, she came to the emergency meeting. The law firm filed a federal complaint against the companies responsible for PFOA. Contamination lawyer Robin Greenwald said it was an emotional day.

"It's so hard to sit down and talk to people who feel this incredible guilt, like, 'I did this to my family,'" she said. "And, of course, nobody did. The polluter does it to the family."

Meanwhile, the town of Petersburg remained without a supervisor until Friday night. The town board elected Alan Webster as interim supervisor. He left his position as a board member to take on the new role.

In his place is the former town supervisor's daughter-in-law, Amy Schaaphok.

"This isn't just about water," Webster said. "It's about the town operating smoothly."

But some in Petersburg are also dealing with jarring blood test results. Gwentyth Young, 10, said her level showed 207 parts per billion, which is more than 100 times higher than the national average.

"My mom has told me to try and stay strong and not to let it bother me a lot, because for being 10, it's scary," she said.

Webster said he plans to begin a quarterly newsletter to keep people informed of the water crisis developments. New board member Schaaphok did not want to do an interview, but Webster said she has great business experience.

Project New York due to water crisis Animals added to PFOA

By Nick Fusaro

Published: June 11, 2016

Channel 10 News, Albany

ALBANY, NY (NEWS10) – A newly formed group in Hoosick Falls called PFOA Project New York is now putting PFOA level numbers to the faces of animals affected by it.

The group was started by a family who says they don't want to be ignored and want legislators to hold hearings on the state's response to the water contamination issue.

People are now concerned about the water that their pets have been drinking and how it could hurt them as well.

Petersburgh Appoints Interim Supervisor

By Tanja Rekhi

Friday, June 10, 2016

Time Warner Cable News, Albany

Alan Webster has seen it all in the town of Petersburg.

"I was with the board around the turn of the century, for eight years, 1996 to 2004," he said, "and I've been back on it since 2014."

Through it all, the lifelong resident has stuck around -- even as the town deals with its PFOA water contamination.

So naturally, when town supervisor Peter Schaaphok resigned at the end of May due to health reasons, Webster felt compelled to take the lead.

"In a small town, actually in any town or when you live anywhere, actually, you are invested in it," Webster said, "and you should be willing to get involved to make sure things turn out the way they should turn out."

He'll be working alongside Schaaphok's daughter-in-law

Amy Schaaphok declined interviews with the media after it was decided that she would replace Webster as the newest board member.

"Amy is a very independent person," Webster said. "She'll speak her mind and be her own person and contribute beautifully in that fashion."

While Webster's first order of business was thanking Peter Schaaphok for the dedication and time he put in as supervisor, he's eager to lead the town out of the water crisis in a more coordinated way.

"We have a lot of information out there, which we need to pull together and to communicate that between departments and people," Webster said. "The plan is to have quarterly newspapers which will really inform residents about everything that's going on, and bring everybody up to the same page of what's happening."

The first order of business, though, will be meeting with the DEC and then coordinating a large town hall meeting with the town's residents.

Meanwhile, Rensselaer County has released the results of the latest round of PFOA testing in Petersburg.

The EPA guidance level for PFOA is 70 parts per trillion. Tests at private homes in the town indicated 44 samples were between 71 and 1,000 parts per trillion. There were also 15 samples over 1,001 parts per trillion.

And tests on private wells found three samples above 71 parts per trillion.

Anyone with a water source that tests above 70 is able to get a filter system installed on their home by Taconic Plastics.

NCPR

Hoosick Falls rep "furious" that health dept. held back toxic water data

by Karen DeWitt (NYS Capitol Correspondent) , in Albany, NY

Jun 10, 2016

The assemblyman who represents Hoosick Falls called for a federal investigation after revelations that Governor Andrew Cuomo's administration knew about elevated levels of a toxin in the village's water for a year and a half before residents were warned.

Cuomo and his administration have increasingly come under fire for reacting too slowly to toxin-laced water in the small eastern New York village. Politico New York reported last week that documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act show the governor's health commissioner and others knew for a full 18 months the water was tainted with PFOA, a chemical linked to cancer. The documents also show that officials actively argued with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officials against warning the residents. New York officials said they held a different "philosophy" from federal officials about how much of the toxin is actually dangerous to humans.

Steve McLaughlin, the assemblyman who represents Hoosick Falls and other parts of Rensselaer County, said he is "furious." "For a year and a half, the Cuomo administration knew, and took affirmative steps to deny the public information that they needed for their health," said McLaughlin, who called the acts "beyond egregious, and may be criminal." "That's why I've asked the U.S. Attorneys to get involved," he said.

For a year and a half, the Cuomo administration knew, and took affirmative steps to deny the public information that they needed for their health.

The letter to Preet Bharara, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and the Northern District's Richard Hartunian, said Cuomo and his officials "actively covered up New York's most serious public health crisis since Love Canal." "They absolutely had a moral and an ethical obligation to inform the public," McLaughlin said. "Did he have a legal obligation? I don't know, but I'd like the U.S. Attorney to take a look and find out."

Cuomo dismissed the Politico report. "That's a whole political 'he said, she said,'" Cuomo said. "I don't know how the state could have been more aggressive."

Cuomo and his aides have taken steps in recent months. In January, they declared portions of the village a Superfund site. After students at Hoosick Falls High School called a press conference demanding a new water source, Cuomo allotted \$10 million to distribute water filters and to seek a new water source for residents.

Villagers also were permitted to get their blood tested and analyzed at state labs. Results for about 2,000 people were mailed out beginning last Friday. That meant many got their test results on a Saturday, and had no way of contacting the health department or their doctor to understand the potential risks they face. An after-hours phone number provided in the letter led to a voice mail for a worker in the health department's environmental bureau, with no other instruction other than to leave a message.

Health Department spokesman Plastiras contends that residents who received the letter on a Saturday could have gone to the health department's three-times-a-week office hours at the village Armory from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays are 2 to 8 p.m.

The governor's health department has not provided a chart or graph to show what percentage of residents had high levels of PFOA in their blood, and said only that the results range from negligible to over 200 micrograms per liter. The average American has 2 micrograms per liter of PFOA in their blood, according to state health department officials. State health officials also have not released a map that could pinpoint where the worst water contamination may be. They said the department needs more time to study the data.

McLaughlin said he is hearing from his constituents and they are frightened and worried. He said he talked to a grandmother who said the PFOA level in her blood was 266. She said levels in her four- and six-year-old grandchildren were 111 and 146. "It's scary," he said.

McLaughlin said if a baby was born 18 months ago, it would have spent its entire life using the PFOA-laced water while Cuomo's officials did not act. "For a year and a half, it was ingesting and bathing in that contaminated water," McLaughlin said.

Michael Hickey, a Hoosick Falls resident whose father died of a rare kidney cancer, has been active in drawing attention to the village's water problem. He said people deserve to have some context and know what the level of the toxin in their blood means, compared to the others who were tested. "The water is one thing," said Hickey. "But for it to be in somebody's blood, or their children's blood, that's a whole new ballgame."

Hickey said the Cuomo administration has gone out of its way to "downplay" the entire water crisis. "It's really not fair," he said.

Hickey and McLaughlin said Cuomo's health officials should have held a public forum with experts available to provide context and answer residents' questions. They say the health department office hours staffed with what McLaughlin says are "bureaucrats" is not adequate.

Some village residents have taken to social media. Posts include photos of people holding up their PFOA blood levels and asking for more answers.

Despite the controversy, there has so far been no public oversight of how the Hoosick Falls water crisis was handled. McLaughlin is a Republican and in the minority party in his house, and does not have the power to call hearings. But he asked Democratic Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie to do so.

Heastie initially said he would hold hearings in April, but has put them off. The speaker said he's not ruling out hearings, but no date has been set. "I never said there wasn't a need for hearings," said Heastie, who added his highest concern was that the people of Hoosick Falls have access to clean water, which he said is now occurring.

Heastie said he is taking the new information that's surfaced over the past few days into consideration, and would not offer an opinion on whether the Cuomo administration handled everything properly.

Lawyers debate how to organize toxic water lawsuits

WNYT Staff

06/10/2016 6:31 PM

HOOSICK FALLS - There's confusion in Hoosick Falls, where an emergency meeting on the PFOA water crisis took place on Friday.

It comes as attorneys are trying to figure out how to proceed with a massive class action lawsuit on behalf of residents.

Attorneys from Weitz and Luxenberg were at the North Hoosick Fire House. They're answering questions and trying to calm everyone down. The biggest concerns are how will PFOA in their blood affect their health and how do they get it out?

Residents packed the meeting early Friday afternoon. Many of them were armed with paperwork from the state Health Department, searching for answers about their blood test.

"It is the number. Is the number enough to give you cancer? The testicular cancer and the other cancers they talked about," wondered Hoosick Falls resident Richard Pierce.

Attorneys from Weitz and Luxenberg, one of the law firms that represents hundreds of residents in a lawsuit, hosted the informational meeting to answer some questions and provide legal guidance.

"There are still more questions as to how to proceed from here. It's not just a matter of the lawsuit to get the money," Pierce pointed out.

It's also about their health. Blood tests for PFOA in Hoosick Falls came back more than ten times higher than the national average. According to the law firm, one test came back at more than 800 ppb PFOA. The average American has 2 ppb.

"Everyone of course wants to know what they can do to remove it and you can't. There's no pill you can take. There's no detox you can go to," admitted Robin Greenwald, an attorney with Weitz and Luxenberg.

Greenwald says the chemical has a half-life and it'll dissipate with time given that the person is no longer exposed to PFOA.

"If you have high levels, it could be 20, 30 years before it's out of your body. That's a pretty hard pill to swallow," Greenwald acknowledged.

A tough pill to swallow for Silvia Potter.

"I'm outraged. I'm outraged about this. I'm outraged that we are being told that the water is clean. It is being treated. It's not such a big deal. This should not happen. This should not have happened to Hoosick Falls," declared Potter.

Weitz and Luxenberg says there's a lot of consider here. There's property damage, personal injury, health monitoring and more. They were in federal court Friday morning and they plan to try to move the case forward as quickly as possible.

Hoosick Falls residents take to social media, talk to lawyers

By WRGB Staff

Friday, June 10th 2016

"I don't think anybody expected our levels to be so high," said Hoosick Falls resident Loreen Hackett.

After getting her PFOA blood test results in the mail, Hackett was shocked at her level, but after seeing results from her grandchildren - she was heartbroken.

"This is what happens when people who are in charge of your health ignore you," Hackett said.

But she refuses to be ignored. After getting the results, she started the PFOA Project with her neighbor in the hopes that putting faces to the numbers will grab the attention of people in power.

"I'm sorry but if you're human, you can't ignore that. We needed to speak. We need to keep speaking. Faces draw more attention," she explained.

And more people working to help Hoosick Falls residents are attorneys from Weitz & Luxenberg. They held a public meeting Friday to talk with people about expanding the complaint filed by the firm against Saint Gobain & Honeywell. The firm is expanding the lawsuit to seek medical monitoring for all affected residents.

"We're now expanding it to anyone who is in the community, children for example who are not home owners," explained Weitz and Luxenberg Managing Attorney Robin Greenwald.

Research shows that PFOA is a probable link to multiple different health issues.

"I'm on medication for two of those right now which I'm afraid of, I'm only 55 years old," said Hoosick Falls resident Kim Forrest.

Forrest has lived in Hoosick Falls for 25 years. She says she's trying to remain confident that the attorneys will be able to get justice for residents.

"I think they're out to help us and I think it's the first time the people have had some kind of safe zone in this community," said Forrest.

"It's not peace of mind, a little piece of peace of mind maybe," said Greenwald.

If 3M stopped making PFOA and PFOS more than a decade ago, how's it still getting into the Tennessee River?

June 11, 2016

Channel 19 News, Huntsville, Alabama

DECATUR, Ala. (WHNT) - Dangerous contaminants prompted an EPA advisory for drinking water, and more of those contaminants appear to be leaking into the water.

3M says it quit making PFOA and PFOS more than a decade ago, but the compounds persist and are the basis behind the current water crisis with the West Morgan East Lawrence Water Authority. The manager of that system advised his customers to stop drinking and cooking with the water because of the contaminants.

So if no one is making the compound now, where's the contamination coming from? How is it still getting in the Tennessee River? Well, we've identified one of the major sources for the contamination, and it's probably not who you'd think it is.

Some people call it Garbage Mountain. It's actually the Morgan County Landfill on the west side of the City of Decatur. This is where 3M dumped tons of industrial waste. We're told much of that waste was contaminated with the compounds PFOA and PFOS. It's buried under tons of dirt and garbage. However, the rain water that seeps down through here comes out at the bottom of the landfill as leachate and it is highly contaminated with both of those compounds.

The landfill operator says Morgan County has one of the most modern and up to date landfills in the Southeast, and he says great effort and expense has gone into capturing the contaminated leachate to prevent it from reentering the environment.

We observed a small stream coming off the property and asked about that water. The operators are not allowed to speak on camera but explained it's rainwater run-off, which is not regulated by state or federal officials. The leachate begins as rainwater that seeps into and through the buried waste. It's collected in an underground holding well, and then pumped a few miles down Highway 20 to the Dry Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, operated by Decatur Utilities.

We obtained their latest permit to operate, and found the Alabama Department of Environmental Management has licensed the plant to discharge a certain amount of the compounds directly into the Tennessee River. The permit was renewed on February 22, 2016. On several pages we found the amounts listed at 26 pounds per day. But when we checked with Decatur Utilities, spokesperson Joe Holmes said, "The 26 has no meaning other than it is a numeric code which tells ADEM the units of the value reported are pounds per day. The actual values shown under the average maximum column are .1150 pounds per day for PFOA, and .1924 pounds per day for PFOS.

In other words, Decatur Utilities is dumping PFOA and PFOS contaminants into the Tennessee River, and the Alabama Department of Environmental Management not only knows it, they approved it.

Environmentalists tell us there are other sources for the continuing contamination, such as rainwater runoff from contaminated areas on and around the 3M site, where there's an ongoing project underway to cap a portion of the land with plastic sheeting to prevent rainwater from seeping into the ground and into various chemicals buried there.

We felt you should know while Decatur Utilities is selling clean water to the West Morgan East Lawrence water system to assist with their problems with PFOA and PFOS contaminants, they are also dumping those same compounds directly into the Tennessee River.

A spokesperson for Decatur Utilities insists its operations are well within the scope of their permits. The landfill operator points out the wastes were dumped in the landfill long before there were any regulations governing it. Decatur Utilities is now providing the West Morgan East Limestone Water Authority with more than two million gallons of fresh water a day in order to dilute the level of contaminants in their water system

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